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LETTER DATED 25 FEBRUARY 1999 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF BURUNDI TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to transmit to the members of the Security Council the text of two press releases on the recent visits to Kenya and Rwanda by the Minister for External Relations and Cooperation of Burundi.

Also attached are the texts of two joint communiqués which were signed at the conclusion of the visit of His Excellency Mr. Sévérin Ntahomvukiye to the United Republic of Tanzania and Uganda.

I take this opportunity to once again express the gratitude of the Government of Burundi for the careful attention which you yourself and the Security Council have given and continue to give to the question of Burundi.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annexes circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Gamaliel NDARUZANIYE
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex I

[Original: French]

Press release issued in Nairobi on 18 February 1999

Burundi and Kenya strengthen their ties of friendship and cooperation

1. The Minister for External Relations and Cooperation, on his visit to Nairobi, was granted an audience at 8 a.m. on Thursday, 18 February, by the President of the Republic of Kenya, His Excellency Mr. Daniel Arap Moi, to whom he conveyed a special message from his counterpart and brother, His Excellency President Pierre Buyoya.

2. During their meeting, Mr. Ntahomvukiye once again expressed to President Moi the gratitude of the Government and people of Burundi for the assistance which he had given them during the period of the embargo and for his contribution to the decision taken by the Regional Summit of 23 January 1999 to suspend the economic sanctions. He reaffirmed the commitment of the Government of Burundi to pursue the Arusha peace talks, under the facilitation of Mwalimu Nyerere, until an agreement was reached, if possible before the end of 1999.

3. The chief diplomat of Burundi also took the opportunity to officially request membership for his country in the future East African Community and sought the support of Kenya for Burundi's candidacy.

4. This message was favourably received by President Arap Moi, who declared that Burundi has always been and remained a friend of Kenya. He welcomed the decision to suspend economic sanctions, noting that Kenya had reserved its position on such sanctions.

5. President Moi also declared his support in principle for Burundi's application for membership in the East African Community and promised to continue to support that country's efforts to achieve a lasting peace.

6. The Minister for External Relations and Cooperation of Burundi thanked the President of the Republic of Kenya for the warm welcome which had been extended to him during his visit.

Annex II

[Original: French]

Press release issued in Bujumbura on 23 February 1999

1. The Minister for External Relations and Cooperation, His Excellency Mr. Sévérin Ntahomvukiye, was granted an audience at 4 p.m. yesterday by His Excellency Pasteur Bizimungu, President of the Rwandese Republic, to whom he conveyed a special message from the President of the Republic of Burundi, His Excellency Mr. Pierre Buyoya.

2. During their meeting, Mr. Ntahomvukiye once again expressed to President Bizimungu the gratitude of the Government and people of Burundi for the very positive attitude which he had shown towards Rwanda during the period of the embargo. He thanked him for his contribution to the decision taken by the Regional Summit of 23 January 1999 to suspend the economic sanctions, and reaffirmed the commitment of the Government of Burundi to pursue the Arusha peace talks, under the facilitation of Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, until an agreement was reached, if possible before the end of 1999.

3. The chief diplomat of Burundi also took the opportunity to inform President Bizimungu that Burundi had officially requested membership in the East African Community and sought Rwanda's sponsorship of its candidacy in the context of the geopolitical situation in the region. It should be noted that Rwanda has also submitted its application for membership in the Community.

4. Mr. Ntahomvukiye transmitted to His Excellency President Bizimungu the invitation of his counterpart and brother, President Buyoya, to pay an official visit to Burundi.

5. President Bizimungu expressed his warm appreciation for the message that had been transmitted and asked Mr. Ntahomvukiye to convey his fraternal greetings to President Pierre Buyoya and to the Government and people of Burundi. He was pleased to accept the invitation to visit Burundi. The date of the visit is to be arranged through normal diplomatic channels.

6. President Bizimungu declared that Rwanda and Burundi shared in common their history, geography, difficulties and hopes. It was for that reason that Rwanda had adopted an attitude of understanding towards Burundi during the period of sanctions.

7. The Minister for External Relations and Cooperation also met with the Rwandan Minister for Foreign Affairs and Regional Cooperation, Mr. Ismail Amri Sued. The two Ministers discussed matters of common interest and decided that cooperation between the two countries should be resumed immediately. To that end, they agreed that Burundi should convene a meeting of the Burundi-Rwanda Joint Commission during the course of the year at a date to be determined through normal diplomatic channels.

8. The chief diplomat of Burundi thanked the Government and people of Rwanda for the warm welcome which they had extended to him during his visit.

Annex III

[Original: English]

Joint communiqué issued in Dar es Salaam on 16 February 1999

1. The Minister for External Relations and Cooperation of the Republic of Burundi, the Honourable Sévérin Ntahomvukiye, paid a four-day working visit to Tanzania from 14 February 1999. He was also carrying a special message from His Excellency Pierre Buyoya, President of the Republic of Burundi, to His Excellency Benjamin William Mkapa, President of the United Republic of Tanzania.

2. The Burundi minister held discussions with the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the United Republic of Tanzania, the Honourable Jakaya Kikwete, and paid a courtesy call on His Excellency Dr. Omar Juma, Vice President of the United Republic of Tanzania, who received the special message on behalf of His Excellency President Mkapa.

3. During his visit, the Honourable Ntahomvukiye took the opportunity to reiterate the gratitude of the Government and people of Burundi to the Government of Tanzania for the decision taken by the regional summit held in Arusha on 23 January 1999 to suspend sanctions imposed against Burundi. He also conveyed the gratitude of the Government of Burundi for the efforts deployed by the Government of Tanzania to safeguard security along the common border.

4. The two ministers exchanged views on different issues of common interest and expressed their satisfaction on the full resumption of bilateral cooperation in the diplomatic, security, economic, cultural, scientific and technical fields.

5. In the diplomatic field, the two Governments agreed to upgrade the representation of the Republic of Burundi in Tanzania to the ambassadorial level.

6. On security issues, the two countries expressed the will to cooperate closely. In this regard, they decided that the Tripartite Committee should meet in Bujumbura from 29 to 30 March 1999 to consider all matters related to refugees and security. In addition, the Government of Burundi has requested Tanzania to help in efforts towards the cessation of hostilities in the framework of the Arusha talks.

7. In the economic, cultural, scientific and technical spheres, the two Governments decided to reactivate the Joint Commission of Cooperation. It was agreed that the Government of Burundi would convene the fourth session of the Commission in September 1999 in Bujumbura. It was recommended that the technical ministries, government agencies and private and business communities of the two countries should resume their contacts at their earliest convenience.

8. In the field of regional cooperation, the Government of Burundi has submitted its application to join the East African Cooperation and requested the support of the Government of Tanzania towards such an end.

9. The Burundi minister reiterated the commitment of the Government of Burundi to pursue peace talks under the facilitation of Mwalimu Julius Nyerere until an agreement has been reached.

10. Honourable Ntahomvukiye expressed his appreciation to Honourable Kikwete and the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania for the warm welcome and hospitality extended during his visit to Tanzania.

(Signed) Sévérin NTAHOMVUKIYE
Minister for External Relations
and Cooperation of the Republic
of Burundi

(Signed) Jakaya KIKWETE
Minister for Foreign Affairs and
International Cooperation of the
United Republic of Tanzania

Annex IV

[Original: English]

Joint communiqué issued in Kampala on 20 February 1999

1. The Minister for External Relations and Cooperation of the Republic of Burundi, the Honourable Sévérin Ntahomvukiye, paid a two-day working visit to Uganda from 19 to 20 February 1999. He was carrying a special message from His Excellency Pierre Buyoya, President of the Republic of Burundi, to His Excellency Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda.

2. The Burundi minister held discussions with the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uganda, the Honourable Eriya Kategaya, and delivered the special message to His Excellency Yoweri Kaguta Museveni at his home in Rwakitura, Mbarara District.

3. During his stay, Honourable Ntahomvukiye took the opportunity to reiterate the gratitude of the Government and people of Burundi to the Government of Uganda for the decision taken by the regional summit held on 23 January 1999 in Arusha to suspend sanctions imposed against Burundi. He also conveyed the gratitude of the Government of Burundi for the efforts deployed by the Government of Uganda to help Burundi towards the achievement of sustainable peace through the Arusha peace talks.

4. On the ongoing peace process in Arusha, both foreign ministers reiterated that the Arusha peace initiative remained the most viable and peaceful avenue for bringing about a peaceful and sustainable end to the Burundi conflict. In particular, they concurred that the peace process must be irreversible and that any extremist tendencies exhibited by some Burundian parties must be avoided.

5. The two ministers exchanged views on bilateral matters and agreed to resume cooperation in the various areas. In this respect, Burundi will convene the next Joint Permanent Commission meeting on dates to be agreed upon through the normal diplomatic channels. They also agreed to exchange visits, especially since these would contribute towards confidence-building among the Burundian parties.

6. In the field of regional cooperation, the Government of Burundi submitted its application to join the East African Cooperation and requested the support of the Government of Uganda.

7. Honourable Ntahomvukiye expressed his appreciation to Honourable Eriya Kategaya and the Government of the Republic of Uganda for their warm welcome and hospitality during his visit to Uganda.

(Signed) Eriya KATEGAYA
First Deputy Prime Minister of
Foreign Affairs of the Republic
of Uganda

(Signed) Sévérin NTAHOMVUKIYE
Minister for External Relations
and Cooperation of the Republic
of Burundi